



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

IFQ Customer Service

(866) 425-7627, FAX (727) 824-5308

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **NOAA Fisheries Service Extends Use of Paper-based Forms for Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program through December 31, 2008**

Regulations implementing the red snapper IFQ program provide for use of paper-based forms in the event that catastrophic conditions exist and IFQ participants cannot submit information electronically. These regulations require NOAA Fisheries Service to determine when catastrophic conditions exist, the duration of catastrophic conditions, and which participants or geographic areas are affected by the catastrophic conditions.

On September 24, 2008, NOAA Fisheries Service determined catastrophic conditions exist in the states of Louisiana and Texas from the mouth of the Mississippi River west to Freeport, Texas (73 FR 55052). NOAA Fisheries Service authorized the use of paper-based forms for red snapper IFQ participants in the affected area until October 24, 2008. Paper-based forms were necessary due to power outages and the loss of homes, businesses, and other infrastructure sustained from Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

Power has been restored in portions of the previously affected area, but some communities along the northeast coast of Texas and western coast of Louisiana are still without power and have significant damage to infrastructure. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined that catastrophic conditions still exist from Cameron, Louisiana southwest to Galveston Island, Texas. NOAA Fisheries Service is authorizing red snapper IFQ participants in the affected area to use paper-based forms for reporting through December 31, 2008. Notification to affected participants is being provided through this Fishery Bulletin, as well as notification in the *Federal Register* and via NOAA weather radio.

NOAA Fisheries Service has previously provided each IFQ dealer the necessary paper forms (sequentially coded) and instructions for reporting during catastrophic conditions. Paper forms are also available upon request by calling IFQ Customer Service at the phone number listed above or by writing:

NOAA Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

Forms should be sent to the address listed on the paper-based form as soon as landings transactions have been completed. The electronic system for submitting information to NOAA Fisheries Service will continue to be available to all IFQ participants. Participants are encouraged to continue using the electronic system during catastrophic conditions if it is accessible.

The IFQ program functions available to participants in the geographic area affected by catastrophic conditions will be limited for those using the paper-based system. There will be no mechanism for transfers of IFQ shares or allocation for those using the paper-based system during catastrophic conditions.

Assistance in complying with the requirements of the paper-based system will be available via IFQ Customer Service 1-866-425-7627 Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern time.

National Marine Fisheries Service  
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